

# ideas for parents

**Practical Suggestions for Building Assets in Your Child**

## FAST FACTS

### ASSET #36: Peaceful Conflict Resolution

*Youth are more likely to grow up healthy when they seek to resolve conflict nonviolently.*

**44%**

*of youth surveyed by Search Institute have this asset in their lives.\**

### What Are Assets?

*Assets are 40 key building blocks to help kids succeed. "Peaceful conflict resolution" is one of five social competencies assets.*

\* Based on Search Institute surveys of almost 100,000 6th- to 12th-grade youth throughout the United States.

## 7 Steps to Resolving Conflicts

**"Children who learn how to think about their relationships with other people do better in life in general,"** says Myrna B. Shure, Ph.D., a developmental psychologist. Shure created the I Can Problem Solve (ICPS) program, which focuses on the thinking skills needed for young people to resolve conflicts peacefully.

Shure suggests before young people begin discussing a specific conflict that they find out if the time and place are good for the discussion. If so, they can begin the seven-step process. If not, they should identify a time and place that work for everyone involved. Then:

- 1.** Identify the conflict. Have each person talk about what happened. Each person's account is equally important.
- 2.** Talk about the events that led to the conflict. What happened first? Second? What escalated the conflict?
- 3.** Name how you feel. Ask others involved to identify how they feel. Encourage people to be honest about how they feel without blaming others.
- 4.** Listen carefully to each person's feelings and accounts of the conflict. Use empathy skills. Try to understand each person's point of view.
- 5.** Brainstorm solutions. Be creative. Affirm each person's ideas but keep encouraging people to think of different solutions.
- 6.** Evaluate each solution. Choose one solution that everyone agrees on.



- 7.** Monitor how the solution works. If something needs to change, start again.

"If children can learn to solve typical everyday problems, they are less likely to become impulsive, insensitive, withdrawn, aggressive, or antisocial," Shure says. "In the long run it is important for children to learn how to think about the problems they encounter in their dealings with other people."

### Helpful Hints

**Tips that make peaceful conflict resolution easier:**

- **Have everyone involved honestly state their needs and wants without blaming others.**
- **Have everyone listen, listen, listen, and try to understand each other.**
- **Stay focused on the conflict at hand; do not bring up other conflicts.**
- **Emphasize creative problem solving and creating solutions not stated.**
- **Negotiate until a win-win result is found.**

## time together

Three ways to improve peaceful conflict resolution with your child:

1. Read about peace and peaceful conflict resolution with your child. For children: *Peace Begins with You* by Katherine Scholes. For ages 8 and up: *On the Wings of Peace* introduced by Sheila Hamanaka. For ages 13 and up: *Peace Tales* by Margaret Read MacDonald. Discuss what you read.
2. When conflicts occur at home, use author William Kreidler's approach: **CAPS**. **C**ool off. **A**gree to work it out. **P**oint out your view. **S**olve the problem.
3. Admit when you've responded poorly to conflict. Apologize. Suggest new ways to solve the conflict.

**Quick Tip:**  
Give children  
the power to  
solve their  
own conflicts.

## talk together

Questions to discuss with your child:

- What is your initial reaction when you're in a conflict with someone? Why?
- Which conflicts in your past have had outcomes that pleased you? Why?
- What conflicts and difficulties are you currently dealing with? What steps can we take together to deal with them?

### Become a Peacemaker

Consider forming a  
peace club. For more  
information, contact:

**Children as the Peacemakers  
Peace Clubs**  
950 Battery Street, Second Floor  
San Francisco, CA 94111

### More Stuff You Can Use

**Raising a Thinking Child.** This book presents a variety of techniques for teaching children up to age 7 how to solve their problems creatively and nonviolently. (Available from VHPS, 175 5th Avenue, New York, NY 10010; 1-800-488-5233.)

**Peace Patrol.** Young people learn step-by-step peaceful conflict resolution skills through this book. (Available from Roots and Wings, P.O. Box 3348, Boulder, CO 80307; 1-800-833-1787.)

## Final Word

**"You cannot shake hands with a clenched fist."  
—Indira Gandhi, first woman prime minister of India**

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